

October 27, 1960

Dr. Peter Medawar
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Dear Peter:

It was gracious of you to take time to reply to our congratulations. I know very well how preoccupied you must be now.

If you meant quite seriously what you asked about some information on the program in Stockholm, let me put you on to the following. In fact, the people there do not fully appreciate how useful it would be to have a capsule summary of what the Nobel festival week is all about. I would definitely urge you to talk to Fred Sanger as a more recent sacrificial victim who can give you at least some insight into the proceedings. I will also send you under separate cover, some odds and ends of materials that I may have floating about here.

There is a volume entitled Nobel The Man and His Prizes which was published in 1950 in Stockholm by the Nobel Foundation. This will at least give you the main formal background. Also, each year the Foundation publishes the addresses given by the laureates as well as the introductory material and I would recommend that you look at some recent years. I am enclosing the excerpts covering my own formal contributions.

The only serious description in print that I am aware of that systematically describes the Nobel week is in a pair of papers by Kendell and Hench which you can find in the Proceedings of the Staff Meetings of the Mayo Clinic, 1951, 26, 417-437. There is also a very well written profile on Nobel and to some extent on the prizes and the related ceremonies, in the New Yorker magazine for March 15 and March 22, 1958.

Finally, let me quote from page 313 of Nobel The Man and His Prizes: "By virtue of the prestige the prizes have attained, a recipient is transformed," as C. J. Davisson has expressed it, 'overnight from an exceedingly private citizen to something in the nature of a semi-public institution.' Such a transition has often created more favourable conditions for further work." I am not certain that I can agree with the last sentence. You will have to tell me about this yourself sometime.

Cordially,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/Jh